

Russian Émigré Artists Boris Grigoriev and Grigory Musatov and 1920s–1930s Prague: Between “Russian Exoticism” and Western Modernism

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Boris Grigoriev and Grigory Musatov in Prague: Two Artists, Two Destinies

The Russian émigré artists Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev (1886–1939) and Grigory Alexeevich Musatov (1889–1941) were not connected by ties of friendship; nor did they expressly engage in lively communication or belong to the same artistic group. After emigrating from Soviet Russia in 1919, Grigoriev was fated to live and work mainly in France, and only once visited the capital of Czechoslovakia;¹ Musatov settled in Prague in 1920 and very rarely left its borders—he apparently visited Paris, an international artistic center, only once, in connection with his solo exhibition there.² Despite these facts, their names are often ‘bundled’ together, both in Russian and Czech art criticism of the 1920s–30s. Moreover, a popular opinion held it that there was a period when Musatov was influenced by Grigoriev’s art.³

The names of these artists were frequently intertwined with such concepts as ‘exoticism,’ ‘barbarism,’ ‘savagery,’ ‘mysticism,’ ‘mysterious Russian soul,’ and so on. The Czech art historian Jaromír Pečírka wrote: “When, being still an unknown artist, Musatov first showed his works at the *Umělecká Beseda* [Artistic Talk] exhibition, it was obvious that these were the works of a foreigner whose color, vision and feelings were different from ours; he was exotic for our nerves; we felt in him something almost barbaric, something untouched by European culture.”⁴ The French writer Claude Farrere described the nature of Grigoriev’s talent even more expressively: “Savage, but not without genius!”⁵

In their works both artists tackled similar motives and images: Grigoriev was interested in Russian rural community in its far-from-festive moments; Musatov was fascinated by the everyday life in a provincial Russian town. Their perception of Russia was linked by a paradoxical mixture of nostalgic reminiscences of their homeland—and its ironical and even sarcastic ridiculing. Their artistic styles are marked by overt expressiveness and the grotesque, the features which are characteristic of many artists who worked

during this dramatic era of collapsing empires, bloody wars and human tragedies.

It is obvious that for European critics the concepts of ‘barbarism,’ ‘savagery’ and ‘exoticism’ denoted not just a set of artists’ individual features formed by their different conditions and circumstances, but some definite generalized and constant qualities of Russian art, the manifestations of its national identity.

Russophilia as a Substrate for Russian art in Prague

The Czech scholar Julie Jančárková has noted that “the persistent talk of a certain ‘Russianness’ in the artists’ work, which circulated for several years in Czech criticism, may be interpreted in two ways: either as a cliché established at the beginning of 1920s . . . , or as a social barrier which allowed immigrants only a certain depth of integration.”⁶ It is hard to disagree; however, there is a different side to this phenomenon: the art of émigré painters, torn out of their native environment, needed to articulate its origins, which they sought in deep-rooted folk, spiritual and sometimes even pre-Christian traditions. This characteristic exacerbation of ethnic markers was almost inevitable at the first stage of the immigrants’ cultural adaptation. It is not so much that society ‘mounted barriers’ before Russian émigré artists, but rather that the artists themselves, facing difficulties in communication with the local cultural milieu, aimed to ‘preserve’ and even conserve their ethnic cultural traditions.

Prague, which was one of the largest centers of Russian post-revolutionary emigration, had a special perception of Russian art which was tied, among other factors, to Russophilic attitudes prevalent in Czech society in the 1920s. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, first President of young Czechoslovakia Republic who had an excellent knowledge of Russian language and culture, wrote in 1926: “All minor nations to the East (Finns, Poles, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Czechs, Slovaks and others) need a strong Russia—other-

wise they will be placed at the favor and disfavor of Germans and Austrians: the allies have to support Russia by all means and ways. After conquering the East, the Germans will conquer the West.”⁷ The Czechoslovak government’s benevolent attitude to the Russian emigration resulted in a certain political strategy, a famous Russian Action (*Ruská pomocná akce*) which created the phenomenon of a Russian Prague.

At the beginning of the 1920s Russian Prague intellectual milieu gave rise to the Eurasianism movement (*Yevraziystvo*) which influenced the aesthetics of *Skythové* (The Scythians), a Slavic artists’ society founded and headed by Sergey Mako (1885–1953), with Grigory Musatov as its vice-president.⁸ The theoretical assumptions of Eurasianism, based as they were on the denial of the dominant role of European culture in the development of civilization, and on the Russian *Sonderweg* thesis tied to the idea of Russia as a Eurasian country, appealed to the artists of this community who strove to express the common ‘Scythian’ (i. e. ‘barbaric’) roots of Slavic cultures in their art.

1920s Prague witnessed the rise of a number of organizations aimed at bringing together Russian and Czech communities. This was the mission of *Česko-ruská jednota* (Czech-Russian Unity association, 1919–1939). Its first president was František Táborský, an art critic, translator and exponent of Russian literature in Czechoslovakia. *Russky Ochag* (The Russian Hearth) society played an extremely important role. It was established in 1925 at the initiative of Alice Masaryková, the daughter of the Czechoslovak President, with the close support of Countess Sophia Panina, who became society’s permanent director, and with the financial support of the American philanthropist Charles Crane, a long-term admirer of Russian artists who had a large number of Russian art works in his personal collection. This society purported to “attend to the spiritual, cultural and educational needs of Russian community in Prague in general and Russian students in particular.”⁹

Interest in the Russian art in Czechoslovakia was encouraged by the work of such art historians as the famous Byzantologist N. Kondakov (1844–1925); the art historian N. Okunev (1885–1949); V. Bulgakov, founder of Russian Cultural Historical Museum (1886–1966); and the critics N. Elenev (1894–1957) and S. Makovsky (1877–1962). The latter worked as an editor of *Iskusstvo slavyan* (The Slavic Art) magazine (1923–1926) which had as its underlying message the unity of Slavic peoples and their cultures. Makovsky was convinced that Slavic unity was “not a theoretical fiction but a future truth, expressed in a particularly clear and convincing way by the language of art and literature.”¹⁰ Despite Makovsky’s intrinsic aestheticism, his views partially coincided with the ideas of “The Scythians” art group.

As a result of all these developments, Prague became “a completely unique place in Russian dispersal from the end of 1921 until 1926/7”—thinks to the historian of Russian emigration I. Savitsky.¹¹ This opinion is supported by the reality of artistic life in Russian Prague, in which both Grigory Musatov and Boris Grigoriev had a place.

Russian Exhibition Practice in 1920s–1930s Prague

In the 1920s–1930s the range of Russian art exhibitions in Prague expanded significantly. During the previous decades Prague had mostly seen the works of such already established Russian artists as G. Semiradsky (1879, then a Russian national), V. Vereshchagin (1886), masters of the realist school of painting in the Exhibition of Russian Art, 1900: N. Roerich (1905), I. Repin (1909), V. Polenov (1910), and members of *Mir Iskusstva* (The World of Art) group (1912) etc. These exhibitions were usually initiated by Czech organizations, such as *Jednota výtvarných umělců* (Artists’ Association), *Umělecká beseda*, *Topičův salon* (F. Topich Salon), *Mánes*, *Krasoumná jednota* (Artistic Association) and others. All of them continued their cultural and cooperative work in the 1920s. The arrival of Russian emigrants in Prague created an opportunity to introduce to the Czech public not only artists of metropolitan schools, but also the works of artists who developed their styles in such provincial cultural centers as Samara, Vilno, Penza, Yekaterinburg etc. Grigory Musatov is a key figure in this respect: being an artist who never studied in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg art schools, he easily blended into the Czech artistic milieu.

In the late 1920s–early 1930s, a circle of young Russian artists who graduated from, or continued to study at Czech art schools, emerged in Prague. Their art was developing from the outset in a foreign cultural environment; the situation of emigration presented them with certain limits, but most of these artists were committed to a Russian tradition which they interpreted in a manner that was more complex than a simple visualization of ethnic traits or national motives. Almost all of them became members of the *Soyuz russkikh khudozhnikov* (Union of Russian Artists), registered in 1928, which regularly held exhibitions in Prague and other Czechoslovakian cities.

‘Russian Czechs’, who resided in Czechoslovakia permanently or temporarily, were not the only ones who participated in Prague artistic life; there were also artists from the other centers of the Russian “dispersal:” I. Repin, his son Yuri and V. Levi from Finland (1923, 1925, 1928); S. Kolesnikov from the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1926); from Germany, M. Lagorio and N. Istsele-

nov (1924); from France, M. Dobuzhinsky (1926), I. Bilibin (1927), I. Pougny (1929), M. Chagall (1934), A. Exter (1937), artists of the *Mir Iskusstva* group (1924). 'Russian Parisians' were noted not only by their compatriots, but also by Czech artists influenced by the innovations of French art. Many of them travelled to Paris and were introduced to modernist movements; some of them perceived these movements through Parisian émigrés, including Russian ones, who were gradually becoming a part of Western art. One of these was Boris Grigoriev who "astonished" Prague in 1926.

"My past is there . . .": Boris Grigoriev's 1926 Exhibition in Prague

Grigoriev's Prague exhibition was timed to coincide with the Days of Russian Culture which were held in Czechoslovakia and other centers of Russian emigration since 1925. The exhibition was organized by Dalmat Lutokhin (1885–1942), an economist, fiction writer and editor who was exiled from Soviet Russia in 1923. The concept of the exhibition was initially discussed with N. Melniková Papoušková; S. Panina, N. Elenev, and A. Masariková also directly contributed to the project.

By the mid-1920s Grigoriev was famous both in Europe and North America. He acquired for himself a reputation as a striking and contradictory artist, who on the one hand fled the Bolsheviks in 1919, on the other was one of the first who showed the art of revolutionary Russia in the West. An offer of an exhibition in Prague appealed to him—it was an opportunity to show his works in a kindred Slavic country. "You are inviting me to Prague—he wrote to D. Lutokhin in January 1926—Try to put together an exhibition of 60 of my works, I have some very serious works, never before seen in your parts, because I am one of those in the world who has already paved a road to neoclassicism. Every major museum has 2–3 of my pieces. You could report all this in Czechoslovakia."¹² Of course, summer was not the best season to ensure the exhibition's success, but the artist agreed to it because he wanted his works "to be noted there and to be of some use not only to the author, but to the Czech youth as well."¹³

In a strange turn of events, Lutokhin first had to prove to the exhibition organizers that the artist, who was just then painting the portrait of the 'proletarian writer' M. Gorky at his villa in Posilippo near Naples, was trustworthy politically. "Naturally, you were right—wrote the artist to Lutokhin—when you vouched for me that I'm not a Bolshevik! What sort of politicians are we—we are artists, we have nothing in common neither with Bolsheviks nor

with anti-Bolsheviks. Only one thing we have left (after all the political tempests)—an art. And if I painted Gorky (and how! If you could only see, that's the real victory!), so what, he is also not a Bolshevik, he is just a genius."¹⁴

A certain political bias of the exhibition's organizers also showed in the fact that, when choosing a picture for the catalogue cover, according to Lutokhin, a "political misunderstanding" occurred: out of the four plates, the Czechs "chose the Kerensky portrait," while the artist proposed for this purpose a portrait of his wife.¹⁵ The situation was saved by S. Panina and N. Elenev who insisted on using politically neutral images. As a result, the catalogue cover featured the portrait of a Normandy woman—a decision that emphasized the artist's European status.¹⁶

This impressive exhibition, which included 40 pictures and 40 drawings, introduced Czech public to Grigoriev's works of different periods, including the pre-revolutionary one. Most of the works were shown at the artist's successful exhibitions in the Paris Charpentier Gallery (October 1925) and in Milan (January–February 1926), in one of Italy's best galleries, "Pezaro" (Palazzo Poldi-Penoli), where 'only one wall' separated the works of Russian artist from the paintings of Botticelli, Bellini and other great masters of Italian Renaissance, whose art at that time had an invigorating influence on Grigoriev's work.

The 'Russian' period in Grigoriev's art was represented in the Prague exhibition only by a few landscape drawings from his "Rasseja" cycle, as well as by the 1910s sketches made in *Prival komediantov* (The Comedians Halt) café. The "New York" picture and the drawings of Palm Beach views in Florida reflected the American experiences of the artist, who spent every summer from 1923 to 1926 in the USA. The exhibition also displayed 'fresh' Rome drawings which the artist brought from his extended Italian travels.

The core of the display was formed by pictures and drawings produced in the first half of the 1920s in France. These included psychologically precise portraits of the artist's contemporaries: the "colorful and bright, with a widely open firm European gaze" image of French writer Claude Farrere; the portrait of Alexey Remizov with a "dreamlike and fantastic" quality reflecting the character of its subject; the portrait of the Russian philosopher Lev Shestov—"poignant, enigmatic, on the impenetrable black background." The display, opened by the large full length portrait of the artist's wife, depicted in an ornate and elegant style. Unfortunately, apart from this portrait, cut to the head (now in private collection), the location of all these works, which are landmarks of Grigoriev's art, is unknown—that is why the cited short descriptions of them, made by the critic L. Lvov at Grigoriev's solo exhibition in Paris in 1925



1 Boris Grigoriev. *Portrait of Alexandr Kerensky*. 1924.
Pencil on paper. Private collection.

(where these pictures were also on display, as in Prague), are such important material.¹⁷

This original portrait gallery of compatriots included pencil drawings. Among them was the soft, lyrical image of the Archbishop Platon, the Primate of the Orthodox Church in the USA, as well as the sarcastic portrait of A. Kerensky portrayed against the backdrop of a typical provincial town with a collapsing classicist mansion and a Russian church at the center. Over Kerensky's head, topped by characteristic bristling hair, tiny armed people are engaged in a full-blown battle. Such metamorphoses of landscape, where trees come to life and 'grow out' in whimsical anthropomorphic forms, were the artist's favorite technique (Fig. 1).

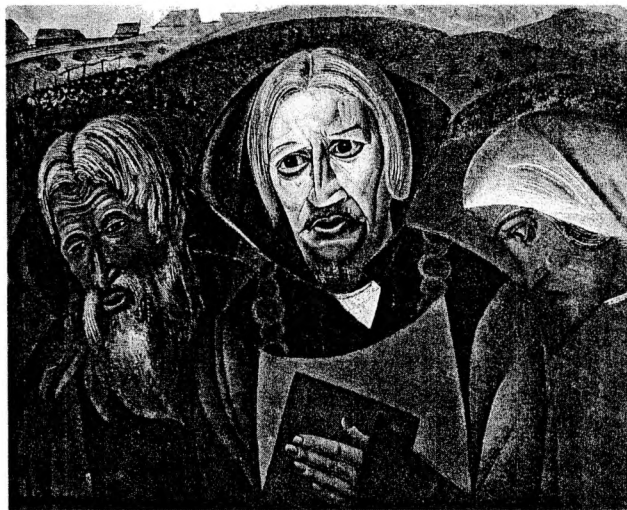
The special place at the exhibition was occupied by the "Faces of Russia" cycle (1921–1924) which included generalized and symbolic pictures, as well as portrait drawings of the actors of Moskovsky Khudozhestvennyi Teatr (MHT, Moscow Art Theater) (V. Kachalov, N. Podgorny, O. Pyzhova). Here the Russian theme, which Grigoriev began to explore before his emigration in "Rasseja" cycle (which attracted a veritable blizzard of indignation, admiration, wonder and

horror), acquired a mystical visionary character. The cycle's characters were particularly familiar to the Russian residents of Prague—their names were well-known, the theater had been on tour in Czechoslovakia, and the so called Czech MHT group had been working in Prague under Maria Germanova direction since 1923 (Fig. 2).

Grigoriev as a European artist, coldly and objectively watching the passions of contemporary society, was represented by the "Seaside Taverns" (Boui boui) cycle which was painted in Marseilles and Toulon waterfront taverns in 1922. But the linear drawings shown at the exhibition easily "stripped" with their ethereal quality any coat of vulgarity typical of these kinds of establishments.

Finally, the cycles "Brittany" ("The Bretons," "Breton Farm" "Bréhat Island," "The Monastery of Saint-Michelle," "Pont-Aven," "Bourg de Batz," etc.) and "Normandy" ("Fishermen's Pier," "Normandy Woman," etc.) attested to the serious formal changes in Grigoriev, who seemed to be moving away from the world of Russian images. In Prague, as in the Parisian *Galerie Charpentier*, the landscapes of Bréhat Island in Brittany attracted attention. This change of focus allowed the Russian artist, wandering around the world, "to enrich the world, through his compassionate approach to the poor Breton existence, by his positive, solemn, chaste contemplation of this foreign life"—such was L. Lvov's unexpected conclusion about Grigoriev's Breton works, which were irrevocably leading the artist away from "Rasseja" reminiscences.¹⁸

The artist was at the height of his fame; successful exhibitions of his work followed in different countries,



2 Boris Grigoriev. Vasily Kachalov as Tsar Fiodor in the drama "Tsar Fiodor Ioannovitch" by Alexei Tolstoy. From the "Faces of Russia" series. 1923. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

and many articles were published about his work. "You are probably aware that in Europe and America I acquired the reputation of the 'historian of the Russian soul,'" he wrote he to his friend in Russia, the art historian V. Voinov, "Some say and assert that I generally follow 'universal pursuits' but I'm telling you as a friend, that this would have been a real charge against me as a misanthrope, and I've never been one; then again, in a way I did become a misanthrope in these past years."¹⁹

To summarize, Grigoriev was represented in Prague in a variety of ways. There were no large programmatic pictures at the exhibition: the central piece from the "Faces of Russia" cycle, of the same name (1922), did not return from the USA in time; the portraits of M. Gorky and his daughter in law N. Peshkova were on display at the Venetian Exhibition of Contemporary Art; "La Misère" was at the Dresden World Exhibition. But thanks to N. Elenev's professional display built on rhythmic alternation between volumes of color, the exhibition made a powerful impression on the viewers.

Grigoriev's exhibition was on display for three weeks (from May 29 to June 20, 1926). The artist himself could not attend, but he followed the exhibition's progress. The exhibition evoked in him melancholy reflections about emigrant life. But he was convinced that "there is no reason to lose heart; any other nation in this situation would have perished a long time ago! But here we, becoming emigrants, make an impression not by servile tricks, but by something frightful, deep as an abyss. They were afraid of it, and we drew near."²⁰

According to the statistics published by the *Mánes* society, the exhibition became one of the most visited events of the season. D. Lutokhin acknowledged in his diary that it "was visited by 800 paid and 300 free viewers: 250 catalogues were sold. 1 picture was sold for 6000 korunas and 1 drawing for 500 korunas. We had losses. *Mánes* lost about 5 thousand. They say it's always like this in Prague."²¹

However, financial failure did not discourage the organizers because the 'overall cultural importance' of the event was great. Obviously, Grigoriev's work roused the public's curiosity: at first many did not like his modernism, but then the viewers returned again. Even President Masaryk visited the exhibition. "Arrived on Sunday with 4 companions. Spent a long time"—attested Lutokhin.²² Indeed, Masaryk agreed to have two sittings for the portrait which the artist wanted to paint. This plan was carried out only six years later.

The Prague exhibition summarized the results of the artist's development during his seven years of emigrant life. The artist himself thought that the exhibition represented only the remains of his past, something which he was leaving behind, and that the new developments in his art were

apparent in the works which were created and left in America and which no one had seen in Europe.

Three days before the end of the exhibition, the Parisian *Vozrozhdenie* newspaper wrote that "to this day the exhibition continues to attract a lot of Czechs and Russians."²³

Grigory Musatov's First Solo Exhibition in Prague: Nostalgia for the Past

Inside the small artistic milieu of Russian Prague Boris Grigoriev and Grigory Musatov were bound to find some points of contact, some common acquaintances or events. It's no coincidence that their solo exhibitions were separated only by several months, and that both were significant events in the artistic life of 1926–27 Prague.

Grigory Musatov's first solo exhibition in Prague took place in *Umělecká Beseda*. The artist became a member of this society in 1923 and was constantly represented at its collective shows. Musatov is probably the only Russian artist (he became Czech citizen in 1937) who became a full member of this famous Czech society. Before him, in the 19th century, V. Vereshchagin was an *Umělecká Beseda* honorary member. But during the 1920s–1930s Russian artists were rarely displayed by *Umělecká Beseda* (in 1929, Ivan Pougny paintings and Ljubov Kozincova's drawings). On the other hand, the society organized international shows, including exhibitions of Parisian artists ("L'École de Paris" in May–July 1931, and others).

Musatov's exhibition opened on January 22, 1927, at the Mikoláš Aleš Hall. The Russian newspaper in Prague, *Segodnya vecherom*, published an article on the occasion which was titled, characteristically: "G. Musatov's Success in Prague." The article stated that: "there is an exhibition opening, of a peculiar Russian artist Grigory Musatov, which invited much attention among Czech art critics and art connoisseurs." It also mentioned that the "Spring Flood" picture was bought at the exhibition by Czech National Museum,²⁴ which was indeed a testimony to the artist's success.

The exhibition was quite extensive; it included 49 pieces, with about 42 pictures and seven drawings. All of the works were created in Czechoslovakia, but almost all of them featured pre-revolutionary Russia. Since we do not know of the whereabouts or fate of Musatov's pre-emigration art, the works displayed at this exhibition are of particular interest, because they show continuation of the artist's earlier evolution.

What did the Prague viewers see at Grigory Musatov's first personal exhibition? There were externalized memo-

ries of his native Samara, a provincial town on the banks of Volga, where the artist grew up; of Penza where he studied at the art school: distinctive types of the lost era and its milieu—strolling ladies and gentlemen, acrobats, military men, fortune reading girls, village troublemakers. They were the sources of the themes and the subjects of his pictures throughout the 1920s, when the artist found inspiration in provincial life and urban folklore with its shop-signs and folk art.

Musatov's works of the 1920s are stylistically uniform. They feature predominantly static figures, balanced compositions, flatness of images, smooth brushwork, varied coloring based on gaudy local colors, grotesque interpretations of characters and an adherence to primitive stylistics. All these features are more or less typical of the Neo-Primitivist movement which developed strongly in Russian avant-garde art of the 1910s. By continuing the traditions of this movement in the 1920s, Musatov found a unique way of using both iconographic methods and folk art, all the while moving toward European modernism. He created a universe of his memories about the environment which embodied the primitive, both in its content and in its visual style.

Czech critics interpreted Musatov's 1920s works mostly as a stinging satire against the obtuseness and narrow-mindedness of Russian provincial inhabitants. The artist and critic V. Mokřý noted that Musatov "in his works emphasizes a lack of taste, full of stupid sentimentality and cowardice." He wrote, "We are witnessing something like an incredibly old-fashioned picture, touching but at the same time scary in its dumb uncouthness, its ill-fitted posture of the past."²⁵ O. Filip was even more radical in his interpretations of the artist's works of this period: "Grigory Musatov is a native of a small town on Volga, he is a revolutionary artist . . . these are belated but ruthless whip blows to the Russian body."²⁶

However, Musatov's 1920s works did not at all possess such a powerful negative charge. According to a perceptive remark of Nadežda Melniková-Papoušková, he "takes the most cruel reality and brings it to the point where it turns into fantasy."²⁷ She also found an explanation for a seemingly paradoxical combination of sentimentality and a desire to ridicule in Musatov's works: "a simple, unsophisticated person might understand Musatov's pictures in a straightforward way . . . ; a cultured one will see in them masks or doppelgangers which the artist created out of living people."²⁸

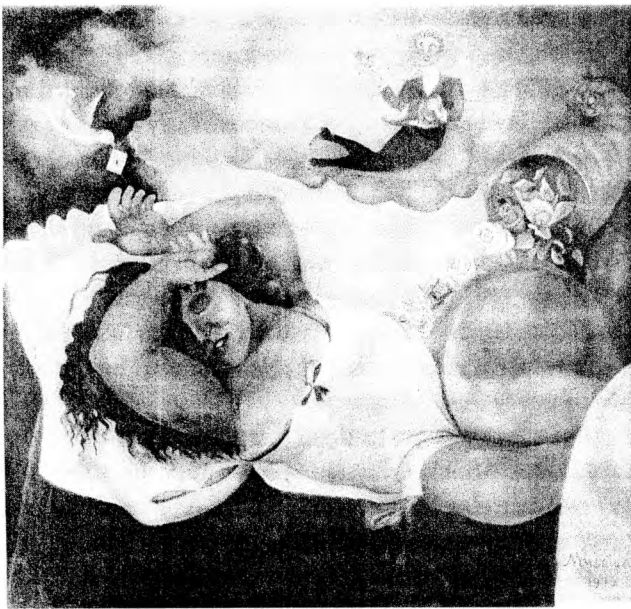
Introducing typified images of provincial life in tsarist Russia—something which was almost total *terra incognita* for the Czech public of the day—Musatov was not only his own main viewer; he also remarkably combined the quali-

ties of a cultural critic and an ordinary person, a commoner. His characters are also interpreted as symbols and signs referring to the nostalgic representation of the Russian tsarist past, of the kind of 'province' which probably "is only dear because it's lost."²⁹

One of the prevalent themes of Musatov's 1920s works, which was vividly represented at his first solo exhibition, is a couple in love. The artist comments ironically on different stages in the development of relationships—from the courting period to the marriage jubilee celebration. Paintings such as "The Flirting" (1924), "A Soldier with his Paramour" (1923), "The Bride's Dream" (1925), "The Newlyweds" (1920s), "At the Photographer's" (1921/1922), "In the Loge" (1926) and, last, "The Jubilee Portrait" (1924) depict typical heroes and heroines of provincial 'fashionable' life. The static character of these large figures, the ostentatiously stylized background and the surrounding objects which strongly resemble props, create an effect similar to that of provincial photographs. "At the Photographer's" depicts married couple visiting a provincial photo studio. The artist seems almost to capture his characters through a photographic lens, preserving these types for eternity. Not by accident did Anatole Jahovsky, the author of the only study on Musatov which was published during his lifetime, called 1920s a 'photographic'³⁰ period in the artist's evolution (Fig. 3).³¹

Folk painting is another component of provincial culture which inspired Musatov during these years. Its techniques are apparent in stylized flowery frames painted around the figures of the soldier and his paramour, as well as in the flowery ornaments of "The Jubilee Portrait." The heart-shaped garland is 'hanging' over the couple's heads, encompassing the dates "1914–1924." The heroes of the day themselves are lounging in the cloud which is hovering over a small Russian town. Cupids with bows in the sky and a little devil sitting on the artist's shoulder enhance the ironic and even slightly kitsch tone of the picture. "The Jubilee Portrait" is probably the best example of Musatov's ability to ridicule what was most dear to him, since the picture's central figures are the artist himself and his wife, their bonds of matrimony being unbreakable until his death in 1941.

This kind of humor was not always understood by others. V. Bulgakov, a founder of the Russian Cultural Historical Museum, left disgruntled reminiscences about the transfer of this painting in the museum's collection: "A modernist artist popular in Prague, G. A. Musatov temporarily transferred into the museum his large humorous picture "The Jubilee Portrait" (oil), an effective but rather equivocal painting. He was too stingy to give anything better: his works sold well."³²



3 Grigory Musatov. *The Bride's Dream*. 1925. Oil on canvas. Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod. (Photo: courtesy, Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod)

The 1927 exhibition also featured portraits of the artist's compatriots who belonged to the Russian Prague intellectual elite—the writers Vasiliy Nemirovich-Danchenko (1849–1936) and Evgeniy Chirikov (1864–1932). The latter believed that “in Prague intellect never dries up because it exists in the concentrated atmosphere of intelligent people.”³³ Musatov himself was a part of this intellectual environment; he socialized closely with many members of the Russian emigration (he lived close to Chirikov), but he never limited himself to émigré circles.

The portraits of the Kalmyk gymnasium (grammar school) pupils and their teacher produce an exotic impression. It is known that Prague had a large Kalmyk expatriot community which resided in the same city districts as the Russian emigrants. Kalmyk children studied at the Russian gymnasium, but had an opportunity to learn their native language and Buddhism. Musatov, who had been teaching in the Russian gymnasium for a long time, produced an entire “Kalmyk” series of works. This is attested to by the artist's daughter Eleanora: “When he was still the teacher in the gymnasium, he painted a small series of portraits of Kalmyk students headed by their boarding school tutor Sanzha Boyanovich Boyanov—a ruddy and cheerful jolly fellow.”³⁴

Significantly, Czech critics did not rate these portrait pieces highly. One of the reviewers found that they were “of incongruous sizes and greyish in color.”³⁵ Accord-

ing to another, “Musatov's exhibition is noteworthy, apart from the disappointing portraits.”³⁶ But these portraits are remarkable for the inner strength of their images. They also possess certain iconographic features (a symbolic treatment of lines and colors, an emphatic flatness of images), which is not surprising considering that Musatov's art education began at the Samara icon workshop belonging to his father.

An image of the writer Vasiliy Nemirovich-Danchenko (1925) is characterized by inner absorption, and his searing serious gaze, directed straight at the viewer, has an association with icon faces. The Kalmyk pupil of another portrait is serious beyond his years (“Kalmyk Boy,” 1925). These portraits have a certain affinity with Boris Grigoriev's manner, described as follows by Nicolay Elenev: “If one thinks of a stroke as a kind of plane, then Grigoriev constantly twists it round its axis, stopping and fixing this plane at the angles of various sharpness.”³⁷

The Turning Years: from Russian Exoticism to the “Kingdom of Pure Art”

After his 1927 first solo exhibition, Musatov's popularity in Prague was on the rise. During his 20 years of emigrant life he took part in 32 group exhibitions and had 9 solo ones, most of which were shown at *Umělecká Beseda*.

Success also followed Boris Grigoriev who in 1927 moved to the artists' town of Cagnes-sur-mere in the south of France, where he built the villa “Borisella” on the site of a medieval chateau. In the summer of 1928, the prominent artist was invited for three years to Santiago by the Chilean government, for the purpose of ‘reforming’ the local Academy of Fine Arts; but Grigoriev spent only half a year there and, after turbulent political events, returned to Europe.

The late 1920s–early 1930s brought changes to the work of both these masters, changes that generally coincided with the development of European art—its drift from nonrepresentational movements toward a new figurativeness and picturesqueness. To a large extent this was the result of changing environments: Czech for Musatov, French for Grigoriev.

The Russian poet and critic B. Poplavsky noted in 1930: “It is extremely difficult to write about Russian artists in Paris. Almost all of them, having come into contact with the French artistic tradition, felt its irresistible influence and deep significance. Almost all of them are in an assimilation period, when they feel drawn to the new and reluctant to let go of the past. That's why their works are usually unequal and varied.”³⁸ Indeed, ‘farewell to the past’ was sometimes a painful and disjointed process—even more so, since this transition coincided with the years of economic depression.

However, Grigoriev himself did not believe that he “had joined the French school.” In 1929 he admitted that the turning point in his art had happened two and a half years ago (i. e. in the middle of 1926—the time of his Prague exhibition). “But I don’t want to talk about some kind of French school influence on my work,” stated the master. “It’s rather that we, the Russian artists, with all our knowledge and diligent attitude towards art, could give some lessons to the French. I believe in Russian giftedness! . . . I don’t deny that the so called international technique is acquired in Paris, but why this must be so—ask somebody else this question; there are very different factors at play. I had been studying for forty years, and now I’ve begun to paint. Gave myself to myself, so to say; allowed myself to ‘create in joy.’ That is my turning point. . . Any school divisions are provisional. We have our own Russian tradition of art. I proceed from it. The basis of this tradition is our old and great icon painting, and in later ages we even subjugated foreigners to our tradition.”³⁹

Musatov’s art of this period assimilated new traits and motives which brought him even closer to European modernism. The artist in some way came into contact with the Czech version of Surrealism. An increasingly stylized, atemporal and irreal character of space introduced a certain metaphysic quality into his works, similar to the concept of ‘metaphysical art’ of the Italians Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà. Incidentally, Musatov could have seen de Chirico’s works even while living in Prague, at the *Umělecká Beseda* exhibitions in October 1931 and April–May of 1935.

Being a member of *Umělecká Beseda*, Musatov certainly was influenced by Czech art, especially that of Jan Zrzavý, whom Musatov met soon after his arrival in Czechoslovakia. This original Czech artist not only became Musatov’s close friend until his death, but also played a key role in his emigrant existence.

Some of the parallels are visible in Musatov’s picture “The Blind” (1929) which was painted between his neoprimitivist and ‘psychological’ periods. The characters (three poor musicians) are still rendered in primitivist manner, but the unusually dark shades of blue and ochre create an overall gloomy coloring and mood to the picture. A sinister yellowish background, highlighting the figures from behind, increases the ‘estrangement’ effect.

Zrzavý used a similar lighting effect and a mysterious ambience in his “Melancholia II” (1920), in which the solitary female figure also sits at the table, in deep thought. Musatov’s “The Blind” resemble Zrzavý’s figures with their common situation of inaction, motionless and sadness. Musatov knew works of his friend well, and during his transitional period some of the Czech artist’s themes became reflected in his pictures.

Spatial transformations and phantasmagorical images bring Musatov’s works close to the paintings of Josef Šíma (1891–1971), a Czech surrealist artist who often lived in France. For example, many of Musatov’s early 1930s works (“The Signal,” “The Flight,” “The Evening,” “The Aeroplane”) feature a cloud that acquires symbolical quality—as a symbol of transitivity, ‘sky wanderings’, unattainability. The cloud motive was often used by Šíma in his works, such as “Clouds” (1931), “Theseus Return” (1933), and “Memories of Landscape Which I Have Never Seen” (1936), in which a cloud also becomes a symbol of something inscrutable, dangerous and magnetic.

But the artists are brought together not so much by these common themes, but rather by an atmosphere of surreal metamorphoses. This is evident in one of Musatov’s most important works of this turning period—“The Signal” (1931). Not by chance A. Jahovsky considered this picture “the first piece which develops into surrealism.”⁴⁰ However, Musatov, while approaching surrealism visually, never embraced it on the level of content. “The Signal” and other works of this period do not embody surrealist irrationalism; on the contrary, Musatov’s paintings look like concise and succinct messages, although their meaning may be subjected to different interpretations.

According to Jahovsky, at the beginning of the 1930s the artist “became completely exterritorial and formally entered Western art.”⁴¹ This remark seems valid, because overt national tone was gradually disappearing from Musatov’s works. He was still a Russian artist, but his Russianness manifested itself in a different way and was concentrated in the archetypal image of a bearded, sturdy Russian peasant (*muzhik-bogatyř*), which became one of the central characters of his 1930s works. At the same time, the formal characteristics of his works were becoming more and more supranational.

The artist’s integration into Czech culture was attested by the appearance of the aforementioned book by Anatole Jahovsky “Grigorij Musatov. Anti-surrealismus,” which was published by *Legiografie* in 1931 (the text was written in Russian and translated into Czech by Břetislav Hůla). Not many Russian émigré artists were honored with a study published during their lifetime (this happened more often in Berlin or Paris, especially during the Russian publishing boom of 1920s).

One of the main problems of Jahovsky’s study was his identification of the Russian artist in the changing cultural environment. Trying to solve this problem, the author admitted that Musatov, “capable of regeneration, forever left his former soul behind.”⁴² In 1931 this conclusion probably seemed obvious, but very soon the artist’s new works

showed that his soul never stopped being Russian, but his 'Russianness' was now expressed visually in a different way—through the language of Western modernism.

Between "The Scythians" and Paris

In 1932 Grigoriev and Musatov met at the exhibitions of Prague group *Skythové* and in the Paris gallery *La Renaissance*.

The *Skythové* group had an international membership: its exhibitions (group shows of 1931 and 1932 and solo exhibitions of S. Mako in 1933) included Ukrainian, Russian, Yugoslavian, and Czech artists whose artistic identities are hard to define in simple terms. Sergey Mako, a leader of the society, was Ukrainian by birth and founded the Ukrainian Studio of Plastic Arts in Prague; however, Czech critics regarded him as an artist whose paintings fascinated by an "extraordinary barbarian mysticism which saturates the incomparable art of Mark Chagall; with the living Russian soul: wide, deep, emotional, exotic."⁴³

The Prague resident Musatov and the Parisian Grigoriev seamlessly entered the circle of artists who proclaimed the artistic version of 'Eurasianism' to be a form of Slavonic unity and a preservation of identity. At the second exhibition of "The Scythians," which took place in the hall of the French Institute in March–April 1932, both of them shone so much that Melniková-Papoušková noted that "officially it is called an exhibition of the *Skythové* group, but apart from Grigoriev and Musatov it is hard to talk about true art."⁴⁴

Out of eleven participants (V. Blažek, E. Brezinsky, G. Musatov, A. Golovin, B. Grigoriev, J. Komárek, S. Mako, K. Pičman, N. Rodionov, A. Orloff and B. Urban), Grigoriev was the only one who was given an opportunity to show 20 works (presumably because that year he served as the group's honorary chairman—this is stated in the catalogue). As such, this was an exhibition inside an exhibition (not surprisingly most studies mistakenly call this show Grigoriev's solo exhibition).

The selection of Grigoriev's works for this exhibition is notable: there were paintings from the "Rasseja" and "Faces of Russia" cycles (1921), "The Poverty" (1928), pictures from the Chilean series: "Aurocana. Chili" (1928), "Santiago de Chili" (1929), four portraits of composer Sergey Rachmaninoff (1931), the "Ramayana" canvas (dedicated to Gandhi, 1931), French still lifes (1930), and landscape sketches (1931). It was obviously not a coincidence that the programmatic "Scythian" exhibition featured the juxtaposition of East and West, of icon faces and psychological portraits, of French Cote d'Azur landscapes and decorative Chilean exoticism. The huge painting "Faces of the World"

(1920–1931, Prague National Gallery, 2.5 x 2.5 meters) was a unifying work: it joined together Grigoriev's characters of the previous decades—from the famous stage director V. Meyerhold to the Metropolitan Platon, from Breton old men to the "grandmother of Russian revolution," E. Breshko-Breshkovskaya (the artist intended to visit her as soon as he came to Czechoslovakia). The purchase of this work by the Czechoslovakian government was not only profitable financially for the artist; it also had a great therapeutic impact, because these were the years of the depression when museums rarely bought large works (at the Paris Salon d'Automne of 1931 there was much talk about this painting, but nobody bought it).

Grigoriev's personal presence at the exhibition increased considerably his Czech connections. He became friendly with František Kubka, writer, critic and translator (he translated Alexander Blok's poem gave its name to the Prague group). He also began a correspondence with Aarno Laurin, chief editor of *Prager Presse*, where Grigoriev's works were stored after the exhibition ended. Laurin helped to 'promote' Grigoriev's name in the Czech press: *Prager Presse* (this newspaper had an international standing and printed articles in German) published a review of his "The Brothers Karamazov" illustrations, which was important for Grigoriev who was preparing the illustration series for an exhibition. Prague gave the artist opportunities to interact with international community: among others, Grigoriev met Bulgarian artist Dobry Dobrev who painted his portrait in front of the exhibition (Fig. 4).

However, Grigoriev considered his main mission in Prague to be the project of President Masaryk's portrait. In this he was partially helped by the President's children: his daughter Alice and son Jan, a Czech diplomat and politician. The artist was given two sittings at the Presidential residence in Lány castle, where he made a number of drawings. Masaryk was open and sympathetic. An elderly statesman (he was almost 85), several months before his resignation he preserved both his intellect and wisdom, which Grigoriev masterfully grasped in his portrait drawings. The location of the painted portrait, which was displayed at major international exhibitions (in the Parisian Salon d'Automne of 1932 and at the solo exhibitions in New York in 1934 and 1935, etc.) is unknown (in 1930s it was in V. Bashkirov's collection in the USA). (Fig. 5)

In the *Skythové* exhibition G. Musatov showed his well-known 1920s works: "In the Loge" and "The Flirting" (both works were painted in 1924–1925; the catalogue dates differ), "Musicians" (or "Military Band," 1924), "The Newlyweds" (1923), and "The Blind Musicians." These pictures explicitly represent him as a 'Russian theme' artist who



4 Boris Grigoriev. *Portrait of Tomas Masarik*. 1932. Pencil on paper. Location unknown.

treat Russian art with great attention and great appreciation: with attention to its merits; with appreciation due to the example it sets.”⁴⁷

The success at the *La Renaissance* exhibition ‘opened up the doors’ for Musatov and Mako to the Salon d’Automne of 1933. Their debut was followed by the sympathetic Czech critic F. Kubka, who remarked in his review that both artists “now entered the most mature period in their art. They both have been living in Prague for a number of years and belong to the *Skythové* group whose main idea is to return to the soil of their original homeland.” As for the art of “more obstinate and ascetic” Musatov, the critic traced it to “the classical discipline of icon painting. Technically Musatov is close to the French school, but his native Russian [nature] lies in the mood of his paintings of conventional life, behind the sky of which one can feel the steppe.”⁴⁸ Again, this was the recognition of ineradicable Russian roots, despite a close proximity to the French school.

The last Paris episode in Musatov’s artistic life was his joint exhibition with S. Mako in the prestigious *Charpentier Gallery* (April 1938), which introduced the artist’s new works of the 1930s. This gallery often opened its rooms to the Russian émigré artists: B. Grigoriev (1925, 1937), A. Yakovlev (1926, 1932, and 1933), Z. Serebriakova (1931, 1932), N. Kolmakov (1928), A. Beloborodov (1929), S. Rovinsky (1930), B. Pastukhov (1937) and others.

The Parisian experience was undoubtedly important for Musatov—it allowed him to compare his own artistic pursuits with the French version of modernism, which was generally so important for Russian artists who found themselves in a European artistic milieu. However, the inner logic of his evolution as a painter, as well as his Czech artistic experience, was arguably more productive.

Grigory Musatov and “Neohumanism”

In January–February 1935, the 5th solo exhibition of Grigory Musatov again took place in *Mikoláš Aleš* Hall in *Umělecká Beseda*. There the artist showed 40 of his primarily new works painted in the first half of the 1930s. During this period his art had again changed both in its form and content. The main characters of his paintings were still human beings, but now they were neither the provincial beaus nor the cocky troublemakers of the 1920s; nor were they the solitary romantic characters of his turning years—they were usually a sturdy bearded *muzhik* (man), a peasant woman, or children. Their images possess a harmonious quality which is created by using painting techniques resembling those of Impressionism. A network of thick, light brushstrokes covers the canvas and creates a glimmer-

relied on the traditions of folk primitivism. Apparently this was what interested the organizers of the Paris exhibition of Russian art at the *La Renaissance* gallery (June 1932), where he was invited, together with S. Mako, by Boris Grigoriev, who was a member of the organizing committee.⁴⁵

At this, their first exhibition experience in Paris, Musatov and Mako became a part of a circle of artists who were well known in France. “This exhibition is first and foremost the long anticipated meeting with old ‘acquaintances’. . . . Also represented at the exhibition are the Russian artists from Czechoslovakia—G. Musatov and S. Mako”—wrote a Parisian critic about the vernissage.⁴⁶

The exhibition turned out to be one of the most prominent displays of Russian émigré art (73 artists, 433 works) to be held. Members of the *Mir iskusstva* group dominated the show, but there were also artists from other traditions (E. Berman, P. Tchelitchev, N. Gluschenko, G. Gluckmann, A. Minchin, Ch. Soutine, K. Tereshkovich, P. Kremegne, A. Lansky, O. Zadkine). All of this allowed the French art critic Arsene Alexandre to admit that “modern Russian art is marked by continuity, flexibility, a capacity for constant revival in very different times and in the most fierce and courageous struggle . . . This fact obliges the world art to

ing environment devoid of any materiality, where figures appear like mirages—“*Muzhik with Tea*” (1933), “*Sleeping muzhik*” (1934), “*The Tramp*” (1933), “*The Beekeeper*” (1934), “*Mother and Child*” (1934), etc. Environment and figures are made of the same metaphysical fabric; they are connected organically and grow from each other (Fig. 6).

Although the characters do not have any concrete features, since their faces are not drawn, one cannot but feel the reverent and admiring attitude of the artist. Musatov is a humanist; he makes human beings the center of his artistic universe. This brings him close to neohumanist, or the neoromanticist movement represented in the European art of this era by Christian Bérard (1902–1949) and the Russian émigré artists Eugène (1899–1972) and Léonid Berman (1896–1976) and Pavel Tchelitchev (1898–1957).

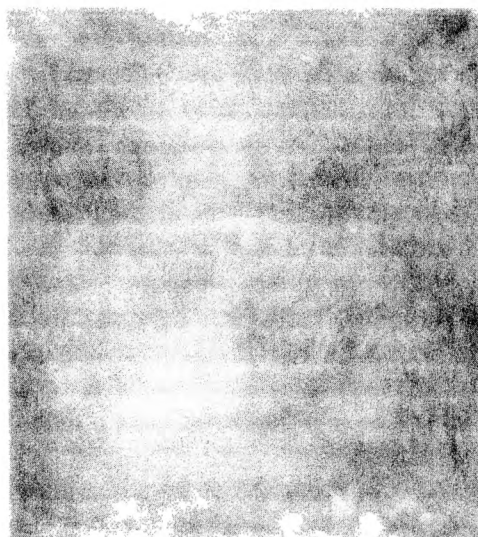
Neohumanism was one of the reactions against cubism, abstractionism and surrealism; it maintained a certain connection with the latter and revived the lyrical qualities of art. Anatole Jahovsky, though he did not mention this movement, still registered the exhaustion of radical trends in art: “The ‘Great revolution’ in fine arts which was raging not so long ago, is now nearing its end. Revolutionary slogans have faded; once audacious paintings became familiar and inconspicuous; the art of the 1910s generation became a part of everyday life, overgrown with canons and solidified into new academies. The heroism and the struggle of this short-run era are over.”⁴⁹ Neohumanism meant returning to the human being, to “his emotions, and his immediate environment,”⁵⁰ (this is relevant for both Musatov and Grigoriev in the 1930s).

Musatov’s humanism was born out of the early origins of his art—the icon painting—and manifested itself not only in taking human beings as his main object, but also in his attitude to the viewer: according to Jahovsky, the artist “builds bridges to his [the viewer’s] until now neglected aesthetic needs.”⁵¹

There is a piece of an invitation ticket in the family archive on which the artist wrote one of his statements: “Art carries in itself the laws of fineness. Their verification is an inner criticism; their application is an artist’s instinct. If neither one nor the other exists—then there is no artist; if there is an artist, he should have both one and the other; and an artist is a law unto himself.” G. Musatov undoubtedly was “a law unto himself:” he neither followed manifests, nor was guided by any particular trends, nor consciously imitated or aligned with anybody. This artistic ‘homelessness’ is a main feature of his art. The inner foundation of his art—the love for his homeland—remained unchanged, but the mode of its expression changed with time. This was apparently what allowed Jahovsky to say: “Musatov’s points of con-



5 Boris Grigoriev. Illustration for Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. 1931. Gouache, watercolor, charcoal, and graphite on paper. Private collection.



6 Grigory Musatov. *Muzhik (man) with Tea*. (1933). Oil on canvas. Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod (Photo courtesy, Gallery of Fine Arts in Náchod)

tact with Russian painting are purely external ones; that is, there is only an ethnographic similarity. Genetically his art is not connected with it at all and does not possess its own genealogy.”⁵² The notion of only ethnographic similarities between Russian art and Musatov’s works may be too radical, but it has some basis. He was remarkably unconstrained in his use and interpretation of existing techniques, boldly connecting them with his own discoveries and following only his inner standards. “His artistic intuition does not know discipline or self-restraint”⁵³—perceptively noted N. Elenév.

Retrospective Exhibition of Russian Painting in Prague in 1935: the Summing Up

The “Retrospective Exhibition of Russian Painting, XVIII–XX centuries” (*Retrospektivna výstava ruského malířství XVIII.–XX. stol.*, March–May 1935) became an ultimate landmark event of artistic life in 1920s–1930s Russian Prague. It was organized by the Slavonic Institute, primarily by the efforts of art historian N. Okunev. The exhibition, for the first and last time during the interwar period in Czechoslovakia, showed three centuries of Russian art comprehensively and chronologically. It can be compared in its scope and completeness with the large exhibition of Russian art in Brussels (1928)—probably the largest manifestation of émigré Russia (more than one thousand works).⁵⁴

The Prague exhibition included about five hundred works of art, all of which were located abroad. Works were brought from such different European countries as Yugoslavia, Finland and Latvia, but most of them were from France. Almost all of the works were borrowed either from the artists or from private collectors in Paris and Prague, a large number was provided by the Slavonic Institute, which was putting together its Russian art collection and archive. In 1932 N. Okunev made a plea to his compatriots: “Here abroad Russian artists manage to unite only in the biggest centers; there are no Russian art journals; organizing exhibitions is a difficult task. For this purpose the Slavonic Institute in Prague, the largest existing scholarly institution aiming to study the whole Slavonic world, is organizing a Russian Art Archive to gather the full records of the Russian artists’ work abroad.”⁵⁵

Despite all this, the exhibition organizers knew that in the situation of emigration it was impossible to show “the best works of the most prominent artists” in the retrospective section; but in the contemporary section “the exhibition has at least the most significant representatives of all Russian art movements. Some works probably would not meet universal approval; but this emphasizes that the exhibition shows the picture of Russian art as it used to be and as it is.”⁵⁶ Indeed, the exhibition featured the works of realists, *Mir iskusstva* artists, neoclassicists, and confirmed modernists (A. Exter, S. Ferat, E. Ettinger, I. Pougny, V. Bart, L. Survage, A. Arkhipenko, A. Lansky, S. Charchoune); many of them were already in the collection of Slavonic Institute.⁵⁷

In his introductory article to the exhibition catalogue N. Okunev provided an overview of the development of Russian art. In contemporary practice, he noted “the return to the academic tradition—of course in the most moderate manner and taking into account existing accomplishments” (meaning K. Petrov-Vodkin, B. Grigoriev, A. Yakovlev,

V. Shukhaev, Yu. Annenkov etc.). On the other hand, being an expert in Old Russian and Byzantine art, he discerned a characteristic mysticism not only in the old art, but also in the paintings of contemporary artists (M. Chagall, Leon Zack, E. Berman). In his opinion, “an inclination toward stylization, schematization, geometrization, toward an unusual play of colors and inner linear harmony and composition, always exists in the Russian artists’ soul despite their two centuries of efforts to turn their back on them.” The art historian noticed in contemporary portrait painting an echo of “old Russian icons, huge heads of saints”—“the spirit of old Russian folk art.”⁵⁸ For him, mysticism was not an ‘exoticism’ or ‘barbarity’ but a succession of sacred art traditions, which were always important to Russian artists, even if they themselves did not realize this.

All these factors were particularly visible at the exhibition, which took place in the ‘Slavonic context’ of the Czech capital—as well as in the works of Boris Grigoriev and Grigory Musatov. Grigoriev was represented by “Faces of the World,” drawings from the “Rasseja” cycle, the Chilean series, and by a scene in a seaside café (these works belonged to the Ministry of Education and the Slavonic Institute). Musatov showed his works “Hay Harvest” and “The Beekeeper,” which reflected the lyrical direction of his painting.

Russian Emigrants—Western Artists?

In 1939 Musatov had a fateful meeting with Ivan Smetana, the Czechoslovak consul to Austria. He was not only an admirer of the artist’s work and a collector of his paintings; he also became a close friend of the family, where he was called, in Russian style, Ivan Matveevich. Eleanor Musatova recorded in her memoirs: “Almost every day I. M. Smetana comes to visit, straight from the office . . . visiting my father, impatient to see what has he painted in his attic?”⁵⁹

They cycled together around Czechia and Moravia in 1940, which prompted Musatov to turn his attention to Czech nature virtually for the first time. Sketches, drawings and landscape oil paintings formed Musatov’s last solo exhibition during his lifetime in *Umělecká Beseda*.⁶⁰ It was keenly appreciated by Zrzavý: “For us his Czech landscapes acquire a special charm: we recognize in them our landscape, but it is cast into the deep Russian thought, epic [*bylinnaya*] and infinite.”⁶¹ They also have an affinity with the translucent landscapes of Otakar Kubín (also a member of *Umělecká Beseda*), built on delicate pastel shadings of color. The Czech tradition of poetic landscape painting, dating back to Karel Purkyně and Josef Mánes, was assimilated by Musatov as something kindred to him, to his lyrical interpretation of reality.



7 Boris Grigoriev. *Self-portrait*. 1932. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Both artists were visionaries who freely moved in the imaginary space of their pictures. During their émigré period they created an image of Russia: bizarre, strange, exotic, and sometimes even scary to Western viewers. Their road toward European modernism had a pronounced national tone.

Notes

1. For more detail, see: Tamara A. Galeeva. *Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev*. Saint Petersburg. 2008.
2. For more detail, see: Daria Kostina. "Cheshskiy period v tvorchestve Grigoriya Musatova" (Czech Period in Grigory Musatov's Work) (M.A. thesis). Yekaterinburg. 2012.
3. Nadežda Melniková-Papoušková. *Grigorij Musatov. Katalog výstavy*. (Grigory Musatov. Exhibition Catalogue). Prague. 1927.
4. Jaromír Pečírka. *Katalog Výstavy obrazů Grigorie Musatova* (Catalogue of Grigory Musatov's Exhibition). Prague. 1935.
5. Boris Grigoriev. *Faces of Russia*. London–Berlin. 1924. 89.
6. Julie Jančárková. "Cheshskaya kulturnaya sreda i russkiye khudozhniki-emigranty" (Czech Cultural Environment and the Russian Emigre Artists), *SLAVIA*. II–III. 2011. 296.
7. T. G. Masaryk. *Mirovaya revolutsiya. Vospominaniya* (The World Revolution. Memoirs). Vol. I. Prague. 1926. 228.
8. For more detail, see: Jakub Hauser. "Jsme Skythové—jsme Asiáté my. . ." Eurasijství a umění meziválečné emigrace ze Sovětského svazu. Sergej Mako a skupina Skify" ('We are the Scythians—we are the Asians. . .' Eurasianism and the Art of Interwar Emigration from Soviet Union. Sergey Mako and 'The Scythians' group). *Umění*. LVII. 172–184.
9. *Russkiye v Prage: 1918–1928 gg.* (Russians in Prague: 1918–1928) (ed: Sergey P. Postnikov). Prague. 1928. 122.
10. Op. cit.: I. L. "Iskusstvo slavyan. Illustrirovannyi i khudozhestvennyi zhurnal" (The Slavic Art. An Illustrated and Artistic Magazine), *Russkaya mysl*. 1923. Books III–V. 421.
11. Ivan Savitsky. "Nachalo "Russkoy aktsii" (The Beginning of Russian Action), *Noviy Zhurnal*: 251. URL: <http://magazines.Russ.Ru/nj/2008/251/sa11.html>.
12. Letter from B. Grigoriev to D. Lutokhin. March 27 1926. IRLI (Russian Literature Institute), Manuscripts Department, collection 592, unit 108.
13. Letter from B. Grigoriev to D. Lutokhin. IRLI (Russian Literature Institute), Manuscripts Department, collection 592, inv.1, unit 108.
14. Op. cit.: Marina Yu. Lyubimov, E. Olonova. "Prazhskiy vystavki Borisa Grigorieva 1926 i 1932 gg." (Prague Exhibitions of Boris Grigoriev in 1926 and 1932), *Russia Abroad. 1917–1939*. Book II. Saint Petersburg. 2003. 468.
15. Idem.
16. Grigorjev Boris D. 29 května–20 června 1926 / CYII Výstava S.V.U. Mánes za účasti Ruskeho domova v Praze. Prague, 1926.
17. Lolly Lvov. "Na Vystavke Borisa Grigorieva" (At the Boris Grigoriev Exhibition), *Vozrozhdenie*. Paris. 1925. October 20.
18. Idem.
19. Letter from B. Grigoriev to V. Voinov September 22, 1925. Russian State Museum, Manuscripts Department, collection 70, unit 106.
20. Letter from B. D. Grigoriev to D. A. Lutokhin on August 7, 1926. IRLI, collection 592, inv. 1, unit 108.
21. Lyubimova, article cited in note 14 above. 469.
22. Idem.
23. *Vozrozhdenie*. Paris. 1926. July 17.

Musatov's art of 1930s also has an affinity with other Czech painters. His painting "The Hay" (1935) and Jaroslav Král's "The Hay Harvest" (1939), apart from the similar theme, have a similar pearly-green coloring and a similar interpretation of space in which the figures are immersed, becoming its organic extension.

For Boris Grigoriev, his Prague experience, the contact with the Czech intellectual milieu, the atmosphere of Russian Prague itself, were of great importance to his artistic identity. To become a part of the Western art system, while remembering his Russian origins, was essential for the master to survive in the situation of emigration (Fig. 7).

Both the artists' environment (Russian, Czech, French) made Europe close and comprehensible not only in everyday life, but also artistically. And this was one of the important factors which facilitated the development of the artists' styles toward Western modernism.

Musatov did not long survive Grigoriev, who died from a serious illness on February 2, 1939, almost on the eve of World War II. They both were working until the last. After the news of the Nazi Germany attack on the Soviet Union, Musatov had his first heart attack; on November 8, 1941, he died from a second one.

24. "Uspekh G. Musatova v Prage" (G. Musatov's Success in Prague), *Segoniy vecherom* LXXIX. 1927. April 7. 3.
25. Victor Mokry. "Grigorij Musatov," *Venkov*. 1927. January 30. (Based on the translation of the article from Czech to Russian preserved in the artist's family archive)
26. O. Filip, "Grigorij Musatov," *Czechoslovatskaya respublika*. 1927. January 21 (Based on the translation of the article from Czech to Russian preserved in the artist's family archive).
27. Melniková-Papoušková, article cited in note 3 above.
28. Idem.
29. *Vospominaniya E. Musatovoy* (Memoirs of E. Musatova). Musatov's family archive.
30. A. Jahovsky. *Grigorij Musatov. Anti-surrealismus*. Prague. 1931. 16.
31. For more detail, see: Daria A. Kostina. "Fotografichnost' v rabotakh Grigoriya Musatova 1920kh godov. K postanovke problemy." (Photographism in Grigory Musatov's Works of 1920s. Defining the Problem), *Ural'skoye iskusstvoznaniye i muzeynoye delo: opyt, problemy, perspektivy* (Ural Art History and Museology: Practice, Problems, Perspectives). Yekaterinburg. 2013. 125–129.
32. V. F. Bulgakov. "Russkiy kulturno-istoricheskiy musey" (Russian Cultural Historical Museum), *Ariavarta*. 1999. III. 160.
33. Op. cit.: *Pisateli russkogo zarubezh'ya* (The Russian Expatriate Writers) (1918–1940). A Reference Guide. Vol. I. Part III. Moscow. 1995. 113.
34. Musatova, work cited in note 29 above.
35. "Po vystavkam" (Around the Exhibitions), *Národní Osвобоzení*. 1927. February 8 (Based on the translation of the article from Czech to Russian preserved in the artist's family archive).
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